

(B) making impressive strides in closing the academic achievement gap in schools in the United States and particularly in schools with some of the most disadvantaged students in both rural and urban communities; and

(C) improving and strengthening the public school system throughout the United States;

(2) supports the ideals and goals of the 21st annual National Charter Schools Week, a week-long celebration to be held May 10 through May 16, 2020, in communities throughout the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities during National Charter Schools Week to demonstrate support for public charter schools.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have 4 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Brian D. Miller, to be special inspector general for pandemic recovery, U.S. Department of Treasury and Dana T. Wade, to be Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRANT HEALTH HEROES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, Americans owe a great debt of grati-

tude to the healthcare heroes on the frontlines of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, I would like to spend a few minutes talking about one special group of healthcare workers: immigrants.

Consider this: 1 in 6 healthcare and social service workers—3.1 million out of 18.7 million—are immigrants. These immigrants are playing a critical role in the battle against the pandemic, yet our broken immigration system does not allow many of them to fulfill their dreams of becoming part of America's future.

I have come to the floor today to tell a story of one of our immigrant health heroes, and I will continue to highlight these stories in the coming weeks. I am also inviting my colleagues from across the Nation to come tell their own stories on social media or on the floor with #ImmigrantHealthHeroes, shown on this chart.

Thousands of immigrant health workers are suffering because of a serious problem in our immigration system: It is the green card backlog. This backlog puts them and their families at risk of losing their immigration status, and it hinders their ability to participate in the fight against COVID-19. Under our current laws, there are not nearly enough immigrant visas, also known as green cards, available each year. As a result, immigrants are stuck in crippling backlogs not just for years but for decades.

Close to 5 million future Americans are in line waiting for green cards. Hundreds of thousands of them are already working in the United States on temporary visas, while many more are waiting abroad, separated from their American families. Only 226,000 family green cards and 140,000 employment green cards are available each year. The backlogs are really hard on these families who are caught in this immigration limbo. For example, children in many of these families age out and face deportation as their parents are waiting in line for their green cards.

The green card backlog includes thousands of doctors—medical doctors—who are currently working in our country on a temporary basis. These doctors face many restrictions due to their temporary status, such as not being able to volunteer at hospitals in COVID-19 hotspots where they are so desperately needed.

The solution to the green card backlog is clear: Increase the number. In 2013, I joined a group of four Republicans and four Democrats who authored a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill. The bill passed the Senate with a strong vote, 68–3, and it would have eliminated the green card backlog.

Last year, I introduced the RELIEF Act, legislation based on the 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill that would clear the backlog for all immigrants waiting in line for green cards within 5 years. I will keep fighting to help all immigrants who are stuck in this backlog.

Last week, I joined with my colleagues, Republican Senators DAVID PERDUE of Georgia, TODD YOUNG of Indiana, and JOHN CORNYN of Texas and Democratic Senators CHRIS COONS of Delaware and PAT LEAHY of Vermont to introduce legislation to quickly address the plight of immigrant doctors and nurses who are stuck in this green card backlog. This backlog poses a significant risk to our ability to effectively respond to this pandemic. Our bill, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, is a temporary stopgap bill that will strengthen our healthcare workforce and improve healthcare access for Americans in the midst of this crisis.

Our bill would recapture 25,000 unused immigrant visas for nurses and 15,000 unused visas for doctors. These are visas that Congress previously authorized, but we never used. Our bill would quickly allocate these visas to doctors and nurses who can help us today in the fight against COVID-19.

It is important to note that our bill requires employers to attest that any immigrant from overseas who receives these visas will not displace an American worker. We want to ensure that all beneficiaries of this bill complement our American healthcare workforce. As Congress begins to work on the next legislation to address this pandemic, I will push for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act to be included.

Today, I want to tell you the story of one immigrant healthcare worker who is stuck in this green card backlog and would benefit from the act I just described.

This is Dr. Ram Sanjeev Alur. Dr. Alur was born in India. As a child, he survived a bout with meningitis, a disease that is often fatal. This experience inspired him to become a doctor. He went to medical school in India, then trained in internal medicine in the United Kingdom. Dr. Alur came to the United States in 2007 for medical residency training. In 2011, he began working as an internist and hospitalist in the Marion Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Marion, IL. Dr. Alur has led the emergency room inpatient unit for the last 3 years, and now, he is on the frontlines of the pandemic as a member of his hospital's COVID-19 response team.

Dr. Alur lives in Marion with his wife and three kids. Their ages are 12, 8, and 6. He sent me a letter, but listen to what he said about his life in southern Illinois living in Marion:

I consider the opportunity to work at the VA medical center as a blessing. To serve the veterans is an honor, responsibility and satisfaction that enhances anyone's life. I found my calling and hope to spend the rest of my career and raise my family here. I would like to see my children blossom in this community and grow into successful, responsible citizens.

Unfortunately, Dr. Alur is one of thousands of doctors stuck in this green card backlog. He has been forced to renew his temporary visa four times